

**Meeting of Executive Member for Planning and
Transport and Advisory Panel**

7th January 2004

Report of the Director of Environment and Development Services

Protection of Walmgate Bar

Summary

- 1 This report advises Members of concerns regarding the long term security of Walmgate Bar and makes appropriate recommendations.

Background

- 2 Walmgate Bar is a scheduled ancient monument (County Monument no 30) and a Grade I listed building. It consists of a passageway with arches at each end and a rectangular gatehouse of two storeys above. A barbican protects the front of the gatehouse. At the rear is a timber-framed projection supported on two stone columns. This section is commonly referred to as the "Elizabethan house".
- 3 The Bar is first mentioned in the mid-12th century. The earliest surviving masonry, the inner arch of the main gate, is of this date. This is the part of the Bar which is at most risk from vehicle strikes. The barbican (the walls projecting in front of the gate towards Lawrence Street) was added in the 14th century. Walmgate bar was the focus of intense attacks during the Siege of York in 1644. The structure was subsequently restored between 1644 and 1648. Walmgate Bar was also leased out as a house and was lived in until 1957. The Bar is now leased out and used as a place of worship.
- 4 Walmgate Bar is the best preserved medieval town gateway in the country. It still retains its portcullis and 15th century wooden doors. It retains significant elements of each period of construction and extension. It has suffered considerable damage from vehicle strikes over the last five years. This has and will continue to endanger this uniquely well-preserved monument.
- 5 Over the years the archway beneath the actual gate itself has been struck on numerous occasions by vehicles that have either not seen or have ignored the height warning signs. On Thursday 6 November a further strike occurred when a rental panel truck carrying a cargo of confectionery attempted to get under the Bar and became wedged

beneath it. This represented the 9th such incident in seven years. This latest caused the following damage:-

- **the arch nearest the City** - scarring above springing, superficial but unsightly
- **the arch to the City side of the portcullis** - scarring of arch above springing. Cracking of two stones near the top of the arch. Horizontal dislodging of three stones (some replaced after the last incident) by up to 70mm towards the portcullis in the outer arch. Horizontal displacement of approximately a quarter of the inner arch (above the outer arch). Damage to the plumbing in the building above.
- **the arch to the out of town side of the portcullis** - Possible scarring, though this may have been as a result of previous incidents. This whole outer arch was replaced in 1997 as a result of a vehicle strike and is becoming very unsightly as a result of repeated scrapes.

6 The cost to repair the above (to be met by the insurers of the vehicle) was in the order of £15,000 and the roadway beneath the Bar was closed for nearly a week. Detailed investigation showed that:-

- the driver had been aware of the height signs but 'thought he could get through'
- the driver, when he first hit the masonry tried to force his vehicle through
- the vehicle came within approximately 300mm of causing substantial damage (in excess of £50,000 to repair) to the exit part of the arch which might have compromised the entire structural stability of either the arch or the Elizabethan house supported over the roadway on the city side of the arch.

7 Prior to the latest incident Members had approved the development of an automatic height warning sign for the Bar. This arrangement was intended to:-

- automatically identify an over height vehicle whilst on its approach to the Bar
- automatically read that vehicles number plate
- activate a variable message sign ahead of the approaching vehicle
- display on this sign the vehicle registration number and instruct the driver to divert away
- retain the number plate information for possible use should the driver continue to proceed and damage the Bar

Work on this concept (estimated to cost around £25,000) had reached the stage where Tender documents had been prepared and were

about to be sent out to the only two companies in the UK that could possibly provide such a package, when the latest incident occurred. The initial reaction was to try to accelerate the tender process but when the above information emerged, Officers took the view that Members might wish to adopt a more positive approach to protecting the ancient monument. The tender process is thus now on hold.

- 8 Apart from general traffic Walmgate Bar is used by the following bus services:-

grimston Bar Park & Ride OUT ONLY (First York)

Every 10 mins from 0715 until 2005 Monday-Saturday
 Sunday Every 10 Mins from 1013 until 1800.

Service No 10 (First York)

Each way Monday-Saturday
 Every 20 mins between 0800-2000
 Every hour between 0550-0800 / 2000-2310
 Sunday every hour from 0800-2310

Service 64 (BusForce)

Both ways Hourly between 0830 & 1800 Monday-Saturdays

Service 747 (East Yorkshire Motor Services)

Both ways very occasional, different on each day of the week

Options

- 9 There would appear to be the following options:-

Option	Effect
A	Do Nothing – ie continue to rely upon static warning signs
B	Install physical measures to protect the Bar from impact damage but otherwise do nothing
C	Continue with the automatic height warning sign system
D	Close the INWARD direction of travel beneath the Bar and retain the OUTWARD direction as it is
E	Close the INWARD direction of travel beneath the Bar and use the current OUTWARD route as in two directions.

In option D cyclists would be able to continue to use the current route under the Bar.

- 10 These options have the following consequences:-

Option	For	Against
A	Inexpensive Extra signing can be added as and when felt necessary	The Bar is still open to damage by over height vehicles
B	If substantial enough, will prevent further damage to the Bar Roadway under Bar can continue to be used as now	Visually intrusive – probably insuperable difficulties with obtaining Ancient Monument consent. Substantial foundations will be required and thus there are stability issues for the monument as well as Archaeological considerations. Very difficult to devise a structure rigid enough to prevent any damage at all.
C	Tenders can be sent out immediately and work completed by March 31 st Record kept of over height vehicles so as to facilitate prosecutions	The Bar is still open to damage by over height vehicles £25,000 investment together with ongoing costs for maintenance of the new equipment
D	Easy to achieve from a practical point of view inexpensive Guaranteed protection for the Bar No ongoing revenue costs	Significant disruption to bus services Potential for public Inquiry if Bus operators object Likely to be expensive both in time and money to reach a point where the required Traffic Regulation Order could be confirmed Unlikely to be achievable until the Autumn of 2004 Potential increased use of Navigation Road
E	Guaranteed protection for the Bar No ongoing revenue costs No measurable impact upon bus services Unlikely to alter use of any other highways in the vicinity Implementation is only subject to the ability to undertake the required works	Very complicated physical solution Adverse impact upon the capacity of the junction (already at capacity in peaks now) Unlikely to be achievable until early June Most expensive solution

- 11 Option A is not recommended since it is abundantly clear that it is only a matter of time before a vehicle strike seriously damages – or even demolishes – the Bar.

Option B is considered by Officers as something that is structurally virtually impossible and virtually certain never to be granted the required Ancient Monument consent by English Heritage

Option C does not provide any greater protection for the bar than Option A – merely more sophisticated warning of the problem, which a driver may elect to ignore, or may simply not see for a number of reasons (ie Fog).

The choice before Members is therefore that between Options D and E.

- 12 With regard to these latter two the key factor affecting the choice is that of the attitude of the Bus Companies.

Under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 a Highway Authority is empowered to make certain Traffic Regulation Orders, others can only be made by the Secretary of State. Proposed orders that have the effect of prohibiting movements by bus operators fall within the former category. The legislation, however, requires that in the event of an objection from a bus operator a Public inquiry must be held before any final decision is taken. In this instance enquiries of the bus operators have indicated that they would object to a closure of the Inward direction of travel unless a convenient alternative were to be made available. Whilst Members do not have to follow the recommendations of such a Public Inquiry, it is most probable that the Council would wish so to do. Given the heavy reliance upon good quality, efficient bus operations it is more than probable that at the very least any attempt to force a closure against the wishes of the bus operators would run counter to the spirit of the established Quality Bus Partnership. This would make the delivery of other bus initiative elsewhere in the city problematic. The only option available that would satisfy bus operators criteria and hence avoid a Public Inquiry, would be Option E.

- 13 Option E might potentially be achieved by one of two means:-

Option	Effect
1	Use the OUTBOUND lane under the wall as a two way route
2	Use the OUTBOUND lane under the wall as a ONE way route for both directions of flow (ie as at Monk Bar)

Investigations have shown that it is impossible to safely use the current outbound lane for both directions of travel simultaneously as the width

of highway under the arch is too narrow. Option E2 is thus the only viable alternative.

Discussion

- 14 Option E2 - Using the outbound lane under the wall as at Monk Bar (see plan attached – a larger scale version will be available at the meeting)

This will require substantial modifications to the traffic signal arrangements so as to introduce a signalised pedestrian phase across what is now an unsignaled crossing of the left turn slip from Walmgate to Foss Islands Road. Changes to the position of signal heads will also be required along with cable modifications and changes to the controller. None of these changes, however, present any technical difficulties. In terms of visual alterations to the setting of the Bar Members should note the following:-

- The secondary traffic signal arrangement adjacent to the Barbican wall facing Foss Islands Road will be removed thus improving the setting
- A new secondary head will be required for the relocated stop line on Walmgate but this will be situated away from the bar and on the opposite side of the road.
- A new pedestrian signal head and push button would be required adjacent to one of the support pillars to the Elizabethan House so as to safely provide for pedestrians crossing Walmgate at the new stop line. There will therefore be a slight reduction in the quality of view of the Elizabethan house from the Walmgate side.

- 15 The scheme will also require the following physical changes:-

- modification to the kerb line of Walmgate - this will have the effect of bringing traffic closer to the Barbican wall facing Foss Islands Road. So as to provide protection to the ancient stonework a substantial cast iron type bollard would be required.
- the abandonment of the current central lane on Lawrence Street – ie the lane now used for traffic wishing to travel through the Barbican and under the Bar. To prevent use of this lane (and potential for driver confusion this should be replaced by a tarmac surfaced island.
- removal of the present regulatory and warning signs on the face of the Barbican facing Lawrence Street.
- The siting of two cast iron type bollards to close off the route beneath the arch of the Barbican.

- 16 Cyclists could either be allowed to continue to use the roadway under the Bar or follow the route used by other traffic via the current outbound archway. The former is, however, not recommended without additional works on the Walmgate side of the Bar since the merge of cyclists and other traffic would be unsafe. These works would consist of the formation of a large paved area effectively forming an extension of the pavement directly in front of the Elizabethan House. Given the impact that such an expanse of paving would have on the setting of the Bar from the Walmgate side this work would have to be undertaken in Yorkstone and would thus be very expensive.

Legal Implications

- 17 Currently there is no Order which legally regulates the direction of flow through either archway where Walmgate goes under the city walls. Thus effectively the arrangement is in essence the same as at any location where an island has been placed in the carriageway. The Head of Democratic and Legal Services, however, advise that a Traffic Regulation Order should be made to secure the closure of the inward direction of flow and the conversion of the outward direction to two way use.

Financial Implications

- 18 The cost of implementing Option E2 is estimated to be:-

Option E2 - basic	£62,000
Option E2 - enhanced	£77,000

Within the Local Transport (LTP) Capital Programme for 2003/04 a sum of £13,000 has been allocated under the 'Policing without Police' heading to implement measures at Walmgate Bar. It is suggested that the additional £37,000 required to implement the basic option (£52,000 for the enhanced option) could be made available from within the overall LTP programme with the required balance being made from the 2004/05 allocation. It is anticipated that the allocated budget for this year would be fully expended in this financial year .

Timetable

- 19 Currently there is a 12 week lead in time for the delivery of the required traffic Signal equipment. An Order placed today would therefore not be delivered until early April. The earliest that work could start is thus around 1 May. Construction is estimated to take approximately 6 weeks meaning that guaranteed protection for the Bar could not be in place until early to mid June.
- 20 Were Members minded to seek to provide earlier protection it would be necessary to close the roadway under the Bar. This would have to be

done by way of a Traffic Regulation Order since the powers available under the Road Traffic Regulation Act in respect of temporary restrictions do not cover the situation in this case. Assuming approval for the advertisement of an Order at this meeting and the acceptance of the bus operators to such a short term expediency, the very earliest that the required power would be available would be late April. Temporary measures to protect the Bar are therefore not recommended.

Recommendation

21 Members views are requested on which of the two options for implementing scheme E(2) (Basic) or (Enhanced) as described in paragraphs 14 -16 should be undertaken and in the light of that decision, the following resolution be then adopted:-

- a) The Local Transport Plan Capital Programme for the Policing without Police budget be increased for the 2003/04 and 2004/05 budget period to a total of £62,000 or £77,000 as appropriate to the option adopted;
- b) A Traffic Regulation Order be advertised and if no objections are received, be made, closing to all vehicles (except cyclists) the inward road way beneath the ancient Walmgate Bar and declaring the current outbound lane under the City Walls, available for two way traffic.

Contact Details

Author:

Peter Evely
Head of Network Management
Phone No 551414

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Bill Woolley
Assistant Director, (Development and Transport)

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers none